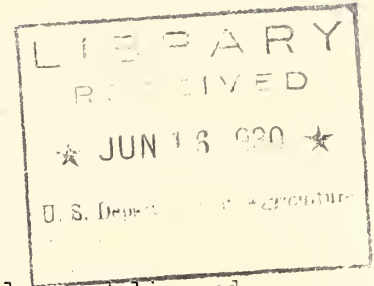


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FIGHTING THE FLEA

A radio talk by Mr. F. C. Bishopp, Bureau of Entomology, delivered through Station WRC and 35 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Tuesday, June 3, 1930.

Friends of the radio audience, -- I have a lively subject to discuss today. You probably know that from your own sad experience. Now, I hope that you won't switch off your radio in disgust when I start talking about this elusive little subject, for I'm not talking about it because I like to, but because many cries for help are coming to me and I think I can show you an easier and more effective way of making a capture than by grabbing frantically here and there with moistened fingers.

In one thing you have a great advantage over many assembled audiences before which I've discussed fleas and other unsavory but none the less intimate insects. This advantage is that you are in the privacy of your own homes with both hands free and any real or imaginary fleas may be "turned over" without your being considered impolite.

Well, we have this unsought after problem to deal with, so let's lace our high top shoes over our trousers; tie some sticky fly paper around our legs-- sticky side out, of course--- and wade in.

"Hold," says some tender-hearted-flea-resistant person, "Why should we seek to destroy life so wantonly?" "Are fleas for no good purpose here on earth?" The answer is, emphatically, "No!" On the other hand they are the carriers of the dread bubonic plague and other diseases and parasites. Fortunately we are little concerned with the flea as a disease carrier so long as plague is kept out of the country by quarantine restriction, but we are concerned with the invasions of our homes, the annoyance of our pet animals and the destruction of our poultry by these jumping denizens of the underworld. So we have no scruples about shooting to kill.

Fleas are blood suckers and always breed in the presence of warm blooded animals. Most house infestations come from pet animals sleeping in basements or out buildings, but hog pens may be the source of supply, especially in the Mississippi Valley.

The first thing is to find where the fleas are breeding, then spray this area with creosote oil. This material should be applied with a good force pump. You should avoid breathing it, so begin spraying at the farther end of the basement and work toward the door. It will burn the skin and plants, so don't get it on your face or body and don't spray plants with it. It is instant death to fleas.

To kill the fleas on the dog and cat dust them lightly with derris or fresh pyrethrum powder; one teaspoonful of derris will kill every flea on a big dog.

If hog pens are the source of the fleas, clean up the litter and spray with creosote oil and use a little crank case oil on the hogs themselves.

The sticktight flea of poultry breeds in chicken houses and under buildings. Spray these places with creosote oil.

If the pet cat has been sleeping in the house and has started fleas breeding in the rugs and cracks of the floor, beat and sun the rugs and put 5 lbs. of flaked naphthalene (moth balls in flaked form) on the floor and leave the room shut up over night.

Prevention is better than cure, - you needn't dispose of the cat. Dust it lightly with derris every 2 weeks and keep stray animals off the premises.

Treating flea bites is not a success but spraying with creosote oil is. More about this lively subject is given in our Farmers' Bulletin on fleas. Write for it. It may help you put your finger on the trouble.